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"LEST  
WE  
FORGET!"



GOD AND  
COUNTRY

*Theodore Roosevelt Post No. 627*

THE AMERICAN LEGION



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With deep appreciation, Theodore Roosevelt Post, No. 627, American Legion, acknowledges financial cooperation in the initial publication of this work, from Frank A. Vath, of Chicago, whose only son, Earl Joseph Vath, was killed in action at St. Trojan, France, on August 20, 1918.

TO the splendid men and women who have offered, and given their lives to the creation and maintenance of American principles, this little volume is respectfully dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.

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American Legion  
Chicago

# THE SPIRIT OF '76



HEMING

"LEST  
WE  
FORGET!"



GOD AND  
COUNTRY

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

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National Loyalty League.*

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# FOREWORD

**A**MONG the numerous harsh lessons taught us by the great war, one which demands most careful consideration and treatment is the large percentage of foreign born in our population, and their apparent misconception of what this country is, what it stands for, and the travail endured in giving birth to the ideals for which we entered the war.

One may take any of the more than two-score distinct foreign nationalities which have come to this country during the past fifty years, and at least seventy-five per cent of them are as utterly unassimilated as when they landed on our shores. And we Americans are largely to blame.

When I speak of two-score nationalities, my contention may be questioned, but a brief consideration of post-war events in Europe will quickly disclose its accuracy. When the question of self determination of small nations arose, nations of which most of the people of this country had never heard, sprang up especially in the territory formerly held by Austria-Hungary, in Russia and the Balkans.

The fact that they have sprung up, and in many cases have just claims to nationality, based upon mother tongue, traits, and physical characteristics, I submit in support of my premise that most of the immigrants who have come to this country have not been assimilated.

These small nationalities are composed of the descendants of conquered peoples, absorbed but not assimilated by the conqueror. It is a well established fact that many a Saxon-German hates the Prussian-German, yet the extent of Saxon subjection to Prussia was not comparable to that of nations brought under the Hapsburg and Romanoff rule.

Through the generations and centuries that subjection has rankled. From generation to generation the hate has been passed on. The only effort made by the conquering nation to assimilate them was by force—sometimes bland force, but nevertheless force. Resistance was more often passive than active, but it existed and continued. Flags, standards, regalia of the old regimes were hidden and treasured against the day when they might again be used. Records and traditions were preserved, often by word of mouth, passed on from father to son, from mother to daughter.

You may say that that does not apply here, because these people have come to this country of their own accord; that there is no ground for hatred here, no element of subjection, no reason for cherishing the old fires of nationality, so far as our nation is concerned. That is quite true, and there has been little of anything else.

We have here our careful observance of Washington's Birthday, and Lincoln's Birthday—both in the same month. And we also have herds of Washington laundries, and Washington "whatnots." We have also Lincoln "this and thats", and early in 1921 a beastly murder was committed in the "Lincoln Gardens" of Chicago, where the name and undying fame of our martyr president were prostituted, instead of being revered.

Why should the foreigner regard our national heroes in a reverent light when he sees them used by *Americans* as "patron saints" for places that are sordid and even criminal?

Why should he thrill at the mention of our great history making events when virtually the only mention that comes to his attention is for the purpose of advertising anything from cocktails to corsets?

The reason the incoming foreigner clings to his own old heroes, traditions and beliefs is because no adequate substitute is offered him here. You may challenge that statement, but I tell you that in some foreign nations a fairly proper concept of our George Washington and Abraham Lincoln is taught in the public schools.

Yet the foreign boy loses that concept on coming here because of the gross affront offered their memory by our public carelessness.

I have queried people of foreign birth, and invariably have been assured that the lightness, the disrespect, the almost contempt with which our great heroes and events are held in this country, would not be tolerated in their own nations, as of their own national heroes and events.

What, then, are the mental processes of the children of these immigrants? They are born here, are citizens by birth and even eligible to the presidency of the United States. For the most part they cling together in sections, at least through the receptive period of the second generation. They go to school and in a desultory way are taught some American history. They also see what they see. They learn that the political "boss" of the ward is a great and powerful man. They see that Washington and Lincoln, whom they are taught, in school, to revere, are used with a gross familiarity that breeds contempt.

This disregard for our great heroes, historic events, institutions and principles, is not confined to our foreign born population or their children. It is omnipresent among the American people. Do you doubt it? What proportion of the American people know when, where and how the American flag was first flown? When, where and under what circumstances "The Star Spangled Banner" was written? How many know the anthem? Every Greek knows the story of Thermopylae. How many Americans know the story of the American Thermopylae—the Alamo? How many know when, where and why Paul Revere made his famous ride, and of its immediate result—the Battle of Lexington? During the past four years many thousands of Americans have discussed the Monroe Doctrine. How many know what it really is, when and how it was promulgated?

There are more genuine, honorable thrills in the history of the United States than in any other national history. There are almost endless stories of hard facts, the telling of which, even in a dispassionate way, is enough to quicken the heart and warm the blood of any real man.

Here is a Chinese proverb which I commend:—

"Only imbeciles want credit for the achievements of their ancestors."

That is true, but it is a mighty good thing to keep alive the record, and whenever opportunity offers, to *emulate* the deeds of our ancestors—if not our individual, our national ancestors. Americans always do so when war comes, but it is utterly wrong to wait for war, because the opportunity to fight for right is daily.

There is another Chinese proverb which I commend. (Perhaps the reason why I quote Chinese proverbs is that no one can accuse me of trying to curry favor with the Chinese vote.) Here it is:—

“One more good man on earth is better than an extra angel in heaven.”

We can get many another good man here on this American earth if we go about it systematically. Sporadic, localized attempts to promulgate Americanism are as futile as to have attacked the Hindenburg Line with a corporal’s guard. There is a way in which a systematic barrage may be laid down over the whole of this nation at regular intervals, through the medium of the newspapers.

So I herewith submit twelve brief statements, each commemorating some stirring, highly important event in our American history, one for each month. There are more pertaining to the American Revolution than to any other time or series of events, but that is natural, since the Revolution saw the birth of this nation and the evolution of most of our finest principles and ideals.

Let me here mention a significant fact. Standing voluntarily shoulder to shoulder in the Continental Army with George Washington, the American colonist, to found a new nation upon principles of justice, were General Sir William Alexander, of the British nobility; the Baron DeKalb, of Bavaria; the Marquis de La Fayette, of France; Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski, of Poland, and the Baron von Steuben, of Prussia.

Now that the nation is formed, and has become the world’s greatest nation, every permanent resident must stand shoulder to shoulder with every other permanent resident, in maintaining those principles, to the exclusion of every foreign power.

I recommend and urge that 1000 daily newspapers in the United States be requested to devote *once a month*, the brief space necessary to print these narratives in a *box on the front page*.

With the exception of the Monroe Doctrine, they are so brief as to occupy less than an average quarter column of space, or

approximately three columns of space *per year*, for all of them. And I believe that no misgivings need be entertained regarding the general attitude of American newspapers. From April 6, 1917, until November 11, 1918, they amply proved their sterling patriotism.

Through the cooperation of the newspapers, a barrage of historic facts, of thrilling information, of necessary reminders, may be laid down to at least sixty millions of our population in a day, twelve times per year. By this means more than half of our population may twelve times per year be caused to think of the same thing at the same time.

I seek the *cumulative effect of simultaneous thought*. It will be most benevolently effective, and IT CAN BE DONE. Any other media of expression which individuals or communities may employ should be acknowledged with deep appreciation.

The fact that these twelve narratives do not include Lincoln's Birthday or Flag Day is neither a matter of carelessness nor disrespect. The former is already a national holiday, carefully observed, and the latter, thanks to the able and worthy efforts of the Flag Day Association will soon, I hope and believe, be also a national holiday.

Yours for the United People of the United States of America.

Wm. HAY WILLIAMSON.

**"THERE IS A TIME TO FIGHT AND  
THAT TIME HAS NOW COME"**



# JANUARY 14-1776

## *Muhlenberg-American*

THE Rev. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg ascended the pulpit of the Lutheran church at Woodstock, Virginia, on Sunday, January 14, 1776, preached an impassioned sermon, and concluded with these words:

“There is a time for all things, a time to preach and a time to pray; *and there is a time to fight and that time has now come. May the God of Hosts be with us!*”

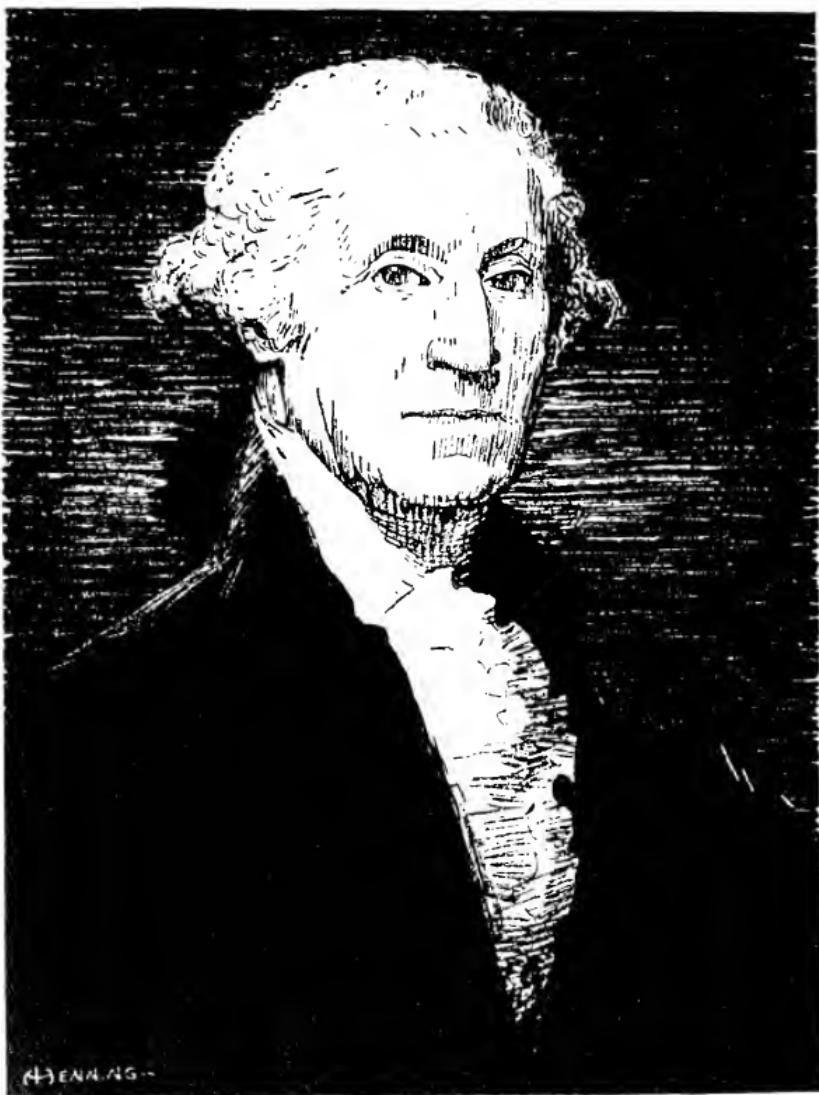
Putting aside his vestments he stood arrayed in the full uniform of a colonel of the Continental Army, by commission from George Washington.

“Those who will,” said he, “follow me.” Walking into the churchyard he recruited a regiment on the spot, and marched to the relief of Charleston, S. C.

Serving brilliantly through the Revolution, he emerged as Major General Muhlenberg, and his statue stands today in the capitol at Washington. Of such was this nation formed.

Long live the United States of America!

# "THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY"



*George Washington*

# FEBRUARY 22 - 1732

## *Washington's Birthday*

THE fate of the modern world lay in a cradle at Pope's Creek, Va., on February 22, 1732, when George Washington was born, the son of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington.

A brilliant statesman and soldier at 26, he became commander-in-chief of the Continental Army when only 43 years old. His conduct as a man and a soldier during the war of the American Revolution won the respectful admiration of the world, and to him, more than any other individual, we owe the independence of this greatest nation.

George Washington's most sublime moment was when he was offered and *declined* the crown and throne of King of America. Instead, on April 6, 1789, he was chosen our first President of the United States, thus sealing the pledge of government by the people.

Twice he was unanimously chosen president, after which he voluntarily retired from public life, and on December 14, 1799, went to his great reward.

Truly he was the Father of his Country,—“First in War, First in Peace, and First in the hearts of his Countrymen.” To his splendid principles and memory this nation is consecrated.

Long live the United States of America!

# "THE THERMOPYLAE OF AMERICA"



# MARCH 6-1836

## *Remember the Alamo!*

TODAY is the anniversary of the "Thermopylae of America." After a continuous artillery bombardment from February 23 to March 6, 1836, General Santa Anna, with 5,000 trained Mexican soldiers, assaulted the Alamo, in San Antonio.

The old mission fort was defended by a garrison of 145, under command of Colonel W. B. Travis, aided by Colonel "Jim" Bowie and Colonel "Davy" Crockett. Not one American surrendered. Every one died fighting, and the Mexicans lost more than 1,200 killed and wounded.

Forty-six days later Colonel Sam Houston, with 750 Americans, smashed Santa Anna's army, captured him, and Texas became a great state of the Union. Thermopylae had two messengers of defeat. The Alamo had none.

Long live the United States of America!

# "ON TO LEXINGTON"



ARENING

# APRIL 18-1775

## *Paul Revere's Ride*

PAUL REVERE was one of the organizers of the Massachusetts "Minute Men," so called because each was always ready to act at a minute's notice.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Revere learned that British troops were moving from barracks and ships to capture the great patriot leaders at Lexington and Concord, seize supplies, and thus nip in the bud the hopes of the Colonies for independence.

Revere crossed from Boston to Charleston by boat, mounted a horse, and either dodging or dashing through several enemy patrols, galloped through the night, halting at each farm house and rousing the Minute Men who hurried after him to Lexington.

There, the following day, was fired the "shot heard round the world," at the Battle of Lexington. There the first American blood of the Revolution was shed, and the war that established our independence was on.

Had the patriot leaders been captured, the American Revolution might never have occurred. Revere saved the day.

Long live the United States of America!

"AND GRIDLEY WAS READY!"



# MAY 1-1898

## *Battle of Manila Bay*

EARLY in the morning of May 1, 1898, in Manila Bay, Commodore George Dewey said to Captain Charles V. Gridley, commanding his flagship, the Olympia:—

“You may fire when ready, Gridley.”

The American squadron consisted of seven warships which had deliberately steamed through scores of enemy mines. The Spanish squadron, under Admiral Montojo, consisted of twelve warships. Though some of the American ships were larger than the Spanish, the latter were supported by powerful land batteries and had the very strong advantage.

After three hours of fighting, the entire Spanish squadron was totally destroyed,—either sunk or burned,—the white flag of surrender was raised above the land batteries, and the Americans did not lose a ship or a man!

Living up to its finest traditions, the American Navy astounded the world by this overwhelming victory, which was duplicated two months later at Santiago when Admiral Cervera's fleet was annihilated with the loss of just one American sailor.

May 1, 1898, saw the end of autocracy on the Western Hemisphere, for after that victory the whole world knew that the Spanish-American war could have but one end—victory for the Americans.

Long live the United States of America!

# "PIRACY BOWS TO THE AMERICAN FLAG"



# JUNE 20 - 1815

*"Millions for defense but  
not one cent for tribute"*

ON June 20, 1815, an American squadron under Commodore Stephen Decatur smashed the Barbary pirates in a furious battle off Cartagena, Spain, and instilled an everlasting respect for the American flag in the Mediterranean.

For more than 300 years these pirates, with fortified cities, armies and fleets of war vessels, had preyed upon the commerce of the Christian world. When this great battle occurred, six maritime nations were paying annual tribute to the Dey of Algiers.

Spain, France, England and Holland tried for three centuries to break their power, and failed, and when the pirates demanded tribute from the United States of America, President James Madison, repeating the words made famous by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney when Minister to France, said:—

*"Millions for defense but not one cent for tribute."*

And Decatur proved it. This infant nation succeeded where all others failed.

Long live the United States of America!

"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGH-  
OUT ALL THE LAND"



# JULY 4 - 1776

## *The Declaration of Independence*

FIFTY-SEVEN American patriots, forming the Congress of our original thirteen colonies, unanimously adopted the Declaration of American Independence at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pa., on July 4, 1776.

Each knew he was risking his life when he penned his name, and Benjamin Franklin said:

“We must hang together or we will hang separately.”

Then and there the Liberty Bell pealed forth the great message inscribed on its rim:—

“*Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land,  
unto all the inhabitants thereof.*”

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration, which laid down for all time the splendid principle that *governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed*. That is the cornerstone of democracy.

While the signers were mutually pledging “their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor” to the Declaration of Independence, George Washington and the Continental Army were proving every paragraph of the world’s most classic statement of political truths.

Long live the United States of America!

# "LET'S GO!"



# AUGUST 9 - 1918

## *The Independent American Army in France*

THEIR mettle amply proved at Cantigny, Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood and Soissons, the supreme Allied command decided that American troops were entirely able to act as an independent force.

From every point of view the organization of such a force was justified. Therefore the formation of *THE AMERICAN ARMY*, under sole command of General Pershing, was decided upon on August 9, 1918, in a conference between Marshal Foch and General Pershing.

The moment was propitious, the emergency that had previously justified the dispersion of our divisions had passed. The intrepid dash and splendid valor of our troops had definitely turned the tide of war to the Allied side.

Then came St. Mihiel; the Meuse-Argonne; the distinctly American offensive that encircled Metz; a rapid succession of decisive American victories that compelled the enemy to sue for peace on the Eleventh hour of the Eleventh day of the Eleventh month of 1918.

Meanwhile the only U-boats which the American Navy did not "get" were those that did not dare to risk an encounter.

Long live the United States of America!

# "B Y THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT"



ATEN SHING

# SEPTEMBER 13-1814

## *The Star Spangled Banner*

DURING the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British in the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key, on September 13, 1814, composed "The Star Spangled Banner" aboard a vessel rocked by the cannonade. Sing it today!

"Oh, say, can you see  
By the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed  
At the twilight's last gleaming?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars  
Through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched  
Were so gallantly streaming.  
And the rockets' red glare,  
The bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there:  
Oh, say, does that Star  
Spangled Banner yet wave?  
O'er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave!"

Long live the United States of America!

# "DEMOCRACY TRIUMPHANT"



# OCTOBER 19 - 1781

## *The Surrender of Yorktown*

OUT generaled by Washington, his retreat cut off by land and water, his outposts captured and his fortifications crumbling under cannon fire, Lord Cornwallis surrendered his powerful British army at Yorktown, Va., on October 19, 1781, and the War of the American Revolution was won.

With his three divisions commanded by the superb La Fayette, Von Steuben and Lincoln, Commander-in-Chief George Washington and the American troops were supported by a French army under the Compte de Rochambeau, and a French fleet under the Compte de Grasse. From that day the torch of freedom, held high through nearly seven weary years of war, has illumined the world.

The best minds in Britain rejoiced at the American victory at Yorktown; the city of London entreated King George to end "this unfortunate and unrighteous war," and on February 22, 1782,—Washington's Birthday, the House of Commons voted to sue for peace.

Long live the United States of America!

# "AUTOCRACY CRUSHED"



# NOVEMBER 11-1918

## *Armistice Day*

B EATEN on land, on water and in the air, representatives of the Hohenzollern dynasty pleaded for a cessation of hostilities, and on November 11, 1918, *THE ARMISTICE* was signed, thus ending the most fearful war in history.

It was pre-eminently a victory for American principles and ideals. The tide of battle turned the moment that the Stars and Stripes, borne by free Americans, floated at the front.

The flood tide of democracy rose at Cantigny, swept onward through Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood and Soissons, and overwhelmed autocracy in the Argonne.

*THE ARMISTICE* marked the fruition and world exposition of the hope expressed by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg in November, 1863:—

*“That from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”*

Long live the United States of America!

" THE STRONG PROTECTING  
THE WEAK"



# DECEMBER 2-1823

## *The Monroe Doctrine*

**T**ODAY is the anniversary of the birth of the Monroe Doctrine. On December 2, 1823, President James Monroe sent to Congress his deathless message, to wit:—

“The political system of the (European) powers is essentially different from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective governments. And to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted.

“We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as *dangerous to our peace and safety*.

“With the existing colonies or dependents of any European power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, *we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.*”

This policy of the strong protecting the weak has always since been maintained and commands the healthy respect of the world.

Long live the United States of America!





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